

SAINT CATHERINE OF SIENA

to form an alliance with Siena, Pisa, Lucca, and Arezzo, for the defence of Tuscany against the supposed sinister designs of the papal representatives. They had hitherto, however, found these other communes unwilling to enter into any league in which the Church was not included. Their growing suspicions that the two legates were plotting against the liberties of the Republic, already excited by the aid that they had given to the Salimbeni and Ubaldini, were brought to a head in June, when, on the conclusion of the truce at Bologna between the Church and the Visconti, Hawkwood's mercenaries were dismissed from the service of the former. There had been great scarcity of food during the spring throughout Florence and the contado (as well as elsewhere in Italy) ; but, in spite of the express command from the Pope to the contrary, Cardinal de Noellet refused to allow grain to be sent thither from the places under his dominion. He now wrote to the Signoria that Hawkwood was collecting troops, and that, unless Florence would lend him at least sixty thousand florins to hire them, he would be unable to prevent these mercenaries from assailing the territory of the Republic. The Signoria having expressed their inability to find the requisite sum, Hawkwood arrived with his company at the Florentine frontier.

There can be little doubt that the ruling faction in Florence had been for some time desiring a rupture with the Church, partly from really patriotic motives, partly with a view to weakening the power of the Parte Guelfo in the Republic. In spite of the explicit allegations of Florentine historians, it is most unlikely that either the Pope or his legates had any intention of undertaking so impossible a task as the subjugation of Tuscany, though it may well be that they contemplated the overthrow of the democratic governments, and the establishment of a regime less hostile to the aggrandizement of the temporal sovereignty of the Church. Cardinal de Noellet probably spoke the truth when he declared that he had no longer any control over Hawk-wood's movements, and he was, perhaps, really unable to supply the Florentines with grain from the cities of Romagna. Gregory